

Six Ways to Stress Less

I know everyone knows the following information; however, sometimes it's helpful to wash the brain regularly, read information we already know.

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Everyone knows the holiday season brings plenty of joy as well as the chaos and stress of last-minute shopping, multiple cocktail parties, and hosting gatherings for friends and family. What you may not know is that chronic stress can contribute to the development of illnesses, including migraines, depression, heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Symptoms of chronic stress (generally characterized by long term pressure, tension, or strain) include having difficulty sleeping, not being able to concentrate well, or having trouble remembering things. People suffering from chronic stress may also become easily irritable and anxious, or develop head, stomach, and muscle aches. That's why it's so important to keep stress at bay — or at least to manage it effectively. These tips can help you cope with it more effectively:

Stay Active. When you exercise, the brain releases multiple mood-enhancing compounds, including endorphins and hormones that can help relieve the effects of stress. Dr. Agatston, preventive cardiologist and author of many medical health books recommends at least 20 to 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week, which includes cardio, resistance training, and stretching.

Get Enough Sleep. When the body is well rested, it is better able to cope with stressful situations and emotions. While sleep needs vary, most adults require seven to nine hours to feel adequately rested. Even with all the hustle and bustle of the holidays, aim to get a consistent amount of shut-eye — and make sure it's enough (as much as you possibly can).

Eat a Balanced Diet. Making healthy foods choices, national food pyramid, will benefit both your body and your mind. Eating the right foods and decreasing the sugar consumption should help bad food cravings. **Eating healthy will help you feel better.**

Practice Relaxation or Meditation. Spending a dedicated amount of time stretching or breathing with no distractions or interruptions can help you collect your thoughts while promoting overall well-being.

Manage Your "To Do" List. Chances are you can't make every party or visit with every relative this holiday season. Determine your priorities and learn to say no to other engagements.

Make Time for Yourself. Try to get a little peace and quiet at some point each day. Whether you enjoy a warm bath, read a magazine, or watch TV, make sure this time is distraction-free. Everything in moderation.

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